

A Happy Place To Work: A Look At Job Satisfaction At Google

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According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2018 the average American worker spends 7.99 hours working during the week (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). When calculated that is around 40 hours a week that the average American spends going to work and being in an environment that is usually away from home, and away from certain strong bonds or connections like family or friends. Because of the long amount of time that a person spends in the workplace throughout the week, it is natural to understand that they would need to have some satisfaction to come from where they work. Job satisfaction is an important aspect for those looking for work, and for those who are working. Companies can provide higher salaries and have some kind of recreational activities, but these items alone are not seen as factors that keep employees happy and that keeps them satisfied enough with positions they are in (Bathena, 2018). Job satisfaction is built around a combination of other factors that include pay, in one study it was noted that the second highest factor in job satisfaction was the respectful treatment of all employees regardless of level within the company (The Society For Human Resource Management, 2016). Therefore it would behoove companies to invest in job satisfaction and when they do by offering good benefits or creating a work culture that values respect as it has been shown that job performance does improve if there is an overall positive outlook on job satisfaction (Davar & Bala, 2012).

A model for high job satisfaction in the current times has been multinational technology company Google. From about 2011 to 2017 Google was ranked number one on Fortune's best one hundred companies to work for list, and part of the reason it had made the list in 2017 was because of some of the policies they had implemented, an example being increasing parental leave (Fortune, 2017). It is because of actions like that, and its many attempts to create perks and good benefits that put Google in the position of being a quality company to work for and one that had high job satisfaction (Council, 2018). However, this idea seemed to fade and its reputation as

a quality company with high job satisfaction would be damaged by a series of actions it has taken that have caused a scandal. The three major negative events that have blighted google fairly recently have been being accused of spying on its workers, hiring an anti-union firm to hinder workers' rights, and being embroiled in poor handling of sexual harassment in their workplace (Wakabayashi et al., 2018; Scheiber & Wakabayashi, 2019; Gallagher, 2019).

Altogether these negative events have combined to shown workers that the current company's culture does not align with values it had espoused and a result of this lowered its value in being a company with high job satisfaction for its employees (Wingard, 2019). But even with this Google is not oblivious to these issues has worked on changing things by hiring a new head of diversity, and on their website, they are quite open with their diversity and culture reports showing that they want to improve and that hopefully, this will bring them back into being a workplace that has high job satisfaction(Google, 2018; Nieva, 2019).

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has struck the world, and in California, all non-essential businesses were closed due to the governor's "Stay at home" order (Helsel, 2020). Under these new rules, the way in which society is functioning has changed. The idea that this paper would like to explore is around job satisfaction as it relates to the new working conditions created by COVID-19. The paper will use Google to examine how job satisfaction, which will be measured through a combination of benefits, work culture and work-life balance, has changed for Google since the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper will also examine whether Google's work culture has a negative or positive influence on its employee's work-life balance. This is done by having examined glass door reviews for Google and conducting a content analysis of those reviews. Furthermore, results will be presented and discussed by conducting statistical tests on the reviews.

Method

Sample

The content analysis sample was composed of 30 Glassdoor job reviews of the technology company Google in March and April of 2020. The sample covers 30 reviews that were taken as a random sample of 60 reviews from the period of March 25th to April 4th to specifically target a part of the COVID-19 pandemic timeline. All reviews that were outside of this date were not considered and any reviews that were not conducted in English were excluded from the analysis.

Procedure

The reviews were rated by the author as part of a team of researchers. Raters were trained in the operationalization of variables and in the coding procedures. A total of 6 variables were coded. These variables were grouped into 3 subsections, Descriptive Characteristics, Google's culture, and Employee Work-life Balance. The first section coded for, Descriptive Characteristics, consisted of 3 variables. These variables were word count, review star rating, and how many days old the review posting was. The first of these variables counted the number of words in the article. The second variable, review star rating, showed how many stars a user gave Google in their review. 1 star being the lowest rating, and 5 stars being the highest. The third variable, how many days old, is meant to count how many days old the review posting was made from March 25th, 2020. The second section coded for Google's Culture, consisted of 2 variables. These variables were benefits, and work culture. The first variable, benefits, looked at if benefits were discussed by the reviewers, and what they were like. Examples include reviewers mentioning if they had great or really good work benefits or mentioned a work perk. The second variable, work culture examined if reviewers discussed the work Culture at Google and what it

was like. Some examples include but are not limited to, mentioning what a great place working at Google is, or stating that the workplace is very political. The final subsection, Employee Work-Life Balance, consisted of one variable. The variable, work-life balance was about the reviewers mentioning and showing how their work-life balance is while working at Google. Examples for this include stating that they might be working over-time or being direct by just saying that they have a good work-life balance.

Results

The results provided by the users who posted on Glassdoor showed that the majority of users (73.3%) rated Google with a 5 star, or the highest rating possible. While the minority of users (10%) rated Google with a 3 star rating, which is the neutral rating. It should be noted that out of the 30 users, no one rated Google lower than 3 stars. Furthermore, in the reviews, 60% of users did not mention benefits at all in their post and 73.3% of users also did not mention work-life balance in their post. While the majority of users (63.3%) mention work culture in their posts. The analysis revealed that out of the 30 users' posts there was a non-significant positive correlation found between Google's work culture and the employee's work-life balance ($r = < .001, p = 1$). Three one-sample t tests were conducted for the coding variables of benefits, work culture, and work-life balance. The users mentioned that they generally have a good work culture at the company ($M = 3.53, SD = .93$). The one-sample t test indicated that this mean value was significantly different from the midpoint (neutral) value of 3.0, $t(29) = 3.12, p = .004$, indicating a significant preference of the users who posted that agreed that they have a good work culture at the company. Finally, the mean score for users rating the quality of their work-life balance was 3 ($SD = .58$). The one-sample t test indicated that this mean value was non-significantly different

from the midpoint (neutral) value of 3.0, $t(29) = < .001$, $p = 1$, indicating that the users did not find their work-life balance to either be poor or very good.

Discussion

Based on the results of looking at benefits, work culture and work-life balance it can be said that at present the employees at Google do not feel that they are working somewhere that has low job satisfaction. The opposite is made clear when looking at the one sample t tests, as results generally indicate that the employees feel as if they are being treated well by the benefits and the overall culture. Furthermore, it was shown that there was no direct relationship between work culture and work-life balance. What is interesting to note is that there should some negative views about the company due to how leadership has acted prior to the pandemic, but that does not seem to be the case and that even during the pandemic there still a positive view on job satisfaction at the company. This could be because ultimately, the negative actions that have occurred may be out weighted by how Google is acting during the pandemic and employees could be feeling a return of what liked about Google. If one were to conduct this kind of coding analysis in the future, I would change the rating of the work-life balance coding unit and increase the sample size. The low sample size can only provide a brief window into seeing how the employees feel and there were some reviews that provided negative feedback but still had a favorable review, so with larger sample size, perhaps a clearer overview could be provided. While the work-life balance unit should have been changed for another variable as it became clearer that users did not consider that something to consider when talking about the quality of the company.

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Appendix A

Coding Book

LIM504B - Team Andromache

Team Andromache will be conducting a content analysis on job satisfaction at Google while the COVID-19 pandemic has been taking place. We will be looking at 30 reviews between March 25, 2020, and April 2nd, 2020 (8 days, Full Week). The postings were submitted and collected via Glassdoor.

1. Themes:

- Word count (Manifest)
- Star rating (Manifest)
- Days old (Manifest)
- Benefits (Latent)
- Work Culture (Latent)
- Work-life balance (Latent)

2. Coding Dictionary

Coding Unit: Word Count

Definition: This coding unit is in relation to the word count of the job review. Only the written/unique thoughts for the reviewer will be counted in the word count. The heading, subheadings, location, and name of the reviewer will not be counted in the word count.

Key Words: N/A

Concrete Examples: N/A

Coding Unit: Star Rating

Definition: This coding unit is in relation to the star rating. Based on the star rating the reviewer gave is the information we will use for the content analysis.

Key Words: N/A

Concrete Examples: The star rating is out of 5.

Coding Unit: Days Old

Definition: This coding unit is in relation to the age of the posting. The age of the posting will be measured from April 4, 2020 (Date of content analysis). The posting will also be measured in days (24hrs).

Key Words: N/A

Concrete Examples: If a posting was submitted on April 2, 2020. Then it will be 2 days old from the content analysis date April 4, 2020.

Coding Unit: Benefits (Dichotomous)

Definition: This coding unit is in relation to the Benefits mentioned in the job review postings

Key Words: Benefits and Perks

Concrete Examples: “The benefits at google are great!” “There are no perks to working at Google”.

Benefits (Dichotomous): No Benefits/Benefits

5-Point Scale: (1) No Benefits (2) Few Benefits (3) No Mention of Benefits (4) Good Benefits (5) Very Good Benefits

Coding Unit: Work Culture

Definition: The coding unit is in relation to whether reviewers mention the work culture at Google and whether they consider it good or bad.

Key Words: Work Culture, Culture, Atmosphere, Politics, and Growth.

Concrete Examples: “The work culture is great.” “The atmosphere at Google is very bad.” “Everything- culture, benefits, career opportunities” “Bloated with politics.”

Work Culture (Dichotomous): No Culture/Culture

5-Point Scale: (1) Very Bad Work Culture (2) Bad Work Culture (3) Neither bad nor good work culture (4) Good Work Culture (5) Very Good Work Culture

Coding Unit: Work-Life Balance

Definition: The coding unit is in relation to mention of work-life balance made by the reviewers.

Key Words: Work-Life Balance, Overtime, Work Load, Fast-paced

Concrete Examples: “You can work overtime frequently.” “Can be very fast-paced and work-life balance sometimes suffers.”

Work-Life Balance (Dichotomous): No Work-Life Balance/Work-Life Balance

5-Point Scale: (1) Very Poor Work-Life Balance (2) Poor Work-Life Balance (3) Neither Poor nor Good Work-Life Balance (4) Good Work-Life Balance (5) Very Good Work-Life Balance

Appendix B

Google Glassdoor reviews. There are 30 reviews total. Dates April 3, 2020 - March 25, 2020.

April 3, 2020



"Ok"



Current Employee - Data Analyst in Mountain View, CA

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

Gym and workout classes are great.

Cons

Commute is very bad and can take hours to get to and from work.



Helpful



April 2, 2020



"Large Client Services Account Representative"



Current Employee - Account Representative in San Francisco, CA

I have been working at Google full-time for more than 3 years

Pros

Great benefits, pay, and work culture. Great quality of life. Lots of mobility within the company.

Cons

It can be easy to move around the company but difficult to move up depending on your role



Helpful



April 2, 2020



"Best employer in the world"



Current Employee - Anonymous Employee

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

Everything- culture, benefits, career opportunities

Cons

Beginning to feel like a large organisation



Helpful



April 2, 2020



"Awesome Experience"



Former Employee - Software Engineer in Los Angeles, CA

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I worked at Google full-time for more than a year

Pros

Pays well, Good Workplace Environment.

Cons

can not think of anything right now.

[Continue reading](#)



Helpful



April 1, 2020



"Awesome Company"



Former Employee - Senior Accountant

I worked at Google full-time

Pros

Google is an awesome company to work for, awesome benefits and top talent!

Cons

Expect to gain a few extra pounds. :)



Helpful



April 1, 2020



"Great place to work"



Current Employee - Anonymous Employee

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

The team is really great

Cons

Working hours are a bit long



Helpful



April 1, 2020



"Great"



Current Employee - Associate Account Strategist in Dublin, Dublin

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

Open minded, inclusive, able to be yourself

Cons

Surrounded by smart people . Could be challenging



Helpful



April 1, 2020



"Great Company."



Current Employee - Anonymous Employee

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for more than 8 years

Pros

Great Place to work for sure.

Cons

None at this stage s.



Helpful



March 31, 2020



"Internship"



Current Employee - Anonymous Employee

I have been working at Google part-time

Pros

nice environment and nice place to grow a career

Cons

Challenging work but have an open mind



Helpful



March 31, 2020



"Great, supportive environment to grow"



Current Employee - Account Manager in Cambridge, MA

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for more than 5 years

Pros

Challenging, Growth mindset, Development, Supportive,

Cons

Difficult to get promoted, can be political at times



Helpful



March 30, 2020



"Look mama, I made it"

★★★★★ Current Employee - Product Manager

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for less than a year

Pros

It's Google, only going to get better from here.

Cons

Google? Cons? I'm sorry there are none at the moment.



Helpful



March 30, 2020



"Still a great company, though less flexible than before"

★★★★☆ Former Employee - Program Manager in Santa Clara, CA

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I worked at Google full-time for more than 8 years

Pros

Great benefits, despite some cutbacks in recent years. The company is still full of wonderful people, and builds some amazing things.

Cons

Management changes in the last few years have lead to serious cultural shifts. Many of the benefits remain, but in many ways Google is becoming more of a tradit

[Continue reading](#)



Helpful



March 30, 2020



"Overall great experience"



Current Employee - Project Manager in Dublin, Dublin

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for more than 8 years

Pros

Good pay and good working environment

Cons

High level of competition



Helpful



March 30, 2020



"One of the best tech companies to work for"



Current Employee - Anonymous Employee

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

great work culture and great processes

Cons

none none none none none



Helpful



March 29, 2020



"Great"



Current Employee - Software Engineer

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

Great work-life balance is one

Cons

I'd say none so far



Helpful



March 29, 2020



"Great company to recruit for"



Current Employee - Recruiter in New York, NY

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for more than 5 years

Pros

Great perks and free food

Cons

Constantly moving around to different client groups



Helpful



March 28, 2020



"Great Internship Experience"



Former Employee - Software Engineer in Sydney



Recommends



Positive Outlook



Approves of CEO

I worked at Google full-time for less than a year

Pros

Organised, Learnt a lot, Would definitely recommend

Cons

More interviews for conversion unlike other Tech Companies



Helpful



March 28, 2020

Helpful (1)



"Rc"



Current Employee - Recruiting Coordinator in Mumbai

I have been working at Google full-time for more than 5 years

Pros

Active at participating in all the events

Cons

Don't have anything specific



Helpful (1)



March 27, 2020



"Great for building your career"



Current Employee - User Experience Researcher in Mountain View, CA

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

Excellent PTO, retirement 401K plan, stocks, salary

Cons

You can work overtime frequently



Helpful



March 27, 2020



"Program manager"



Current Employee - Program Manager in Madrid

☒ Recommends

☐ Neutral Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for more than 5 years

Pros

perks, flexibility, travel, impact and responsibility

Cons

work load, career management, competitiveness



Helpful



March 26, 2020



"good"



Current Employee - Anonymous Employee



Recommends



Positive Outlook



Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

good company, really good company

Cons

nothing bad really, don't know what to say here



Helpful



March 31, 2020



"Bloated with politics"

★★★★★ Current Employee - Product Manager in San Francisco, CA

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☐ No opinion of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for more than 5 years

Pros

Great perks like free food, manageable hours.

Cons

Sheer number of politics that goes on - some people have been around very long, are insucure, and therefor protective and tertritorial. Not good for innovation or moving the needle forward. Also, hard to transfer job ladders if you want to go for example Program Manager to Product. It's all about the internal interviews which are just as hard as external.



Helpful



March 31, 2020



"SEO executive help companies improve their website and increase visitor numbers"

★★★★★ Current Employee - SEO- Chif Executive Officer in Akola, Maharashtra

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for less than a year

Pros

Even if the job you're applying for has you working on a team

Cons

Ability to be creative.. It's challenge for everyone to be creative all the time

Advice to Management

Get to the point..



Helpful



March 30, 2020

Helpful (1)



"It is a great company to start your career with"



Former Employee - SDE1 in Mumbai

☒ Recommends☒ Positive Outlook☒ Approves of CEO

I worked at Google full-time for more than a year

Pros

Great work ethic, Helpful seniors

Cons

Not any specific downside that I can think of

Advice to Management

Try to increase more female employment



Helpful (1)



March 30, 2020



"Still a great company, though less flexible than before"



Former Employee - Program Manager in Santa Clara, CA

☒ Recommends☒ Positive Outlook☒ Approves of CEO

I worked at Google full-time for more than 8 years

Pros

Great benefits, despite some cutbacks in recent years. The company is still full of wonderful people, and builds some amazing things.

Cons

Management changes in the last few years have lead to serious cultural shifts. Many of the benefits remain, but in many ways Google is becoming more of a traditional big company.



Helpful



March 28, 2020

Helpful (1)



"Great Employer"



Former Employee - Web Developer in London, England



Recommends



Positive Outlook



Approves of CEO

I worked at Google part-time for more than a year

Pros

Good pay, well organised, interesting culture

Cons

Can be very fast-paced and work-life balance sometimes suffers

[Continue reading](#)

Helpful (1)



"Great Company, truly cares about employee"



Current Employee - Data Scientist in New York, NY



Recommends



Positive Outlook



Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for more than a year

Pros

great perks, benefits and work life balance, coworkers are kind and smart

Cons

promotion can be slow, too much ambiguity, need to have a lot initiatives and to push through by yourself

Advice to Management

Be more engaged to details/quality of the work



Helpful



March 26, 2020



"Good"



Current Employee - Team Member in Gurgaon, Haryana



Recommends



Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time for less than a year

Pros

Good place to work at

Cons

NothinG wrong to say if

Advice to Management

Nothing



Helpful



March 26, 2020



"Maigari"



Former Employee - Computer Operator



Recommends



Positive Outlook



Approves of CEO

I worked at Google full-time for more than 3 years

Pros

Google is the best place networking and business development

Cons

Great, interested software engineering and technology, cloud and consultant

Advice to Management

Keep doing good



Helpful



March 26, 2020



"good"



Current Employee - Anonymous Employee

☒ Recommends

☒ Positive Outlook

☒ Approves of CEO

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

good company, really good company

Cons

nothing bad really, don't know what to say here



Helpful



March 25, 2020



"Statistical Programmer"



Current Employee - Statistical Programmer in Garland, TX

I have been working at Google full-time

Pros

Very fun place to work with

Cons

stock options no longer as good after the market crash



Helpful

